

HISAKATSU Ooya! suplexes Hayabusa 10 times! SUPER ASTRO quebrada topos Mocha Cota! And other things I loved way too much this week.

Howdy!

Welcome to DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #35! I watched a whole bunch of FMW (HESHAM!!!), a mountain of Big Japan/ECW TV (PHILLLL!!!!) and a phat ass batch of EMLL/AAA/WWO (MIKE!!! DAMS!!!!)

FMW SUMMER TOUR 96 COMMERCIAL TAPE

- This was pretty choice- encompassing the endless touring of FMW during a three month span. If you want to get a good idea of what FMW is actually about in a day in/ day out kinda way, as opposed to their big shows which are tricked-out to fill a stadium, get FMW Summer tour 95 and 96 because they pretty much show who can go and who can't in a real wrestling match since their are more actual THREE-ROPES ONE REF THREE COUNT PIN FALL KNOCK OUT OR SUBMISSION MATCHES as opposed to NO ROPE TIGER NET EXPLODING BARBED WIRE DOUBLE HELL MATCHES. The best on this tape is the absolutely fabulous Ooya/Hayabusa match- which starts to make a case that Hayabusa doesn't suck, he just doesn't show up for the big shows. Ooya beats the holy fuck out of him- hitting I believe the count was 7 suplexes to an Octopus hold to three Akira Hokuto level Back Drop Drivers. Hayabusa was impressive actually staying on the mat, hitting his new array of suplexes that he would use later to make Sasuke/Hayabusa pretty dang okay. If Hayabusa ditches the fragile pansy crap I might actually start digging him. Ooya is the best wrestler in FMW and he shows it on this tape- despite the fact he doesn't have enough singles matches on this. The major downer of this tape is that are no Tanaka singles matches for some reason, which is my main criticism about FMW- their best workers are never showcased in singles matches. I mean TAKA gets a whole singles match on the tape (with the august talents of Ricky Fuji for garsh sakes) and Kanemura and Tanaka are in six-man W*ING/FMW feud matches. They both rule it TOO hard in those, but it's hard to see developement in a lucha libre six-man. Despite that point of contention, this tape was pretty dang hip and I was entertained for a lot of it and only had to fast-forward through a couple of things.

GALAVISION Jan 97- EMLL/AAA

- Okay. I admit; I'm a freak. The Soccer Playing Goats are starting to grow on me slightly. I mean, if I was saddled with the dirt-worst, crappiest gimmick in wrestling, hell if I would work as hard as they do. I'd bank the \$20 and call it a day. I think the fact that they team up with funner-than-fun Venum makes it easier to watch. On this tape, they go up against other "guys with a supremely goofy gimmick who work kinda hard"- Los Duendes (who all dressed like court jesters or something) and it was very okay. Venum did all the spectacular highspots and the other five did all the armdrags into the unlikely fourth-tier lucha submissions. Hey! I've seen infinitely worse. The crowned Jewel of this tape was the EMLL Russian Roulette Tourney with the GREAT Super Astro and his partner (or maybe his son or something) Astro Junior. I watched a big batch of Lucha that spanned a about eight or nine years and I can honestly say that Super Astro is better now than he ever was. He rules it like a motherfucker in this baby, a tournament

to highlight some of the lesser stars in the CMLL firmament- who can all work but aren't as famous as, say, Ray Jalisco Jr. The one I was most impressed with in the tourney that I had never seen before was Ultamatum- who has such a macho name for such a Bob Mackie inspired outfit. He teamed with Brasso de Oro- who is also aging well- and anchored the best match of tourney: Super Astro y Astro Jr vs Brasso y Ultamatum. Since these were all one fall affairs, it is kinda like what Nitro should be- a bunch of eight minute matches that are just long enough to establish an inkling of psychology and then have a extravagant flurry of highspots that set-up the first-tier lucha submission (this time- an actually REALLY neat Boston Crab counter out of a body scissors). Olypia and Olympico were other guys who were pretty neat who I hadn't seen before- as these guys seem to be all over EMLL it seems; not El Hijo Del Santo's or Blue Panther's league but very sound luchadores who aren't afraid to have really good matches. I'm getting way into these kinda wrestlers currently and EMLL is starting to be one of the tapes I'm starting to get really stoked about getting. Meanwhile back in AAA, I was digging the angle at the end of the horrendously wrestled Deisel/Razor Ramone/Jake the Snake vs Pierroth/Cibernetico/Perro Aguayo. Pierroth did a first, I believe: he's a heel that has ANOTHER heel turn as he turns on Mexico to help the Americans beat the shit out of Perro. This was a good way to end a supercrappy match. Cibernetico was great at being aghast at what his fellow rudo was doing as he storms to the dressing room. Jerry Estrada and the rest of the Rudos come down and join Latin Lover and Hector Garza at getting superpissed at Pierroth- the new Heel among Heels. There may be hope for the beleaguered AAA yet as the heat looked pretty intense.

ECW TV/Big Japan

Phil sent me a batch of ECW TV from the last twelve months it seems and it was REALLY choice. Mikey Whipwreck is the bomb! He had a great match with the always suspect Shane Douglas. So the book on Mikey is: one good match with Shane Douglas/ three good matches with the eternally crappy Sandman. Hmmmm.... it's official- Mikey is ECW's Shinjiro Ohtani on a much lower scale. Heal that knee already. The TAZ/Johnny Smith submission match wasn't good, no. not at all. Shane vs Pitbull II (the "Good" one) was very okay. PBII no-sells way too much stuff for me to ever like him and he is deeply saddled with the Scotty Riggs-level arsenal of offense. Shane actually used a little of the psychology that Steamboat taught him in this match and it saved it from being grotesque as their PPV match-up. The Sabu/Van Dam broken ring match was pretty good considering they had to change the whole match on the fly. I would have been more impressed if either of them could just take it to the mat as an option, but they couldn't, so they didn't, so I wasn't. Spike Dudley/Chris Candito was the best squash I've seen in a while. It so easy to forget that Vince ruined one of the best young wrestlers in the world today. The Jericho stuff was great- especially the Jericho/Scorpio match which kicked major hinder. They ain't gonna replace Scorpio, it can't be done. The Big Japan stuff Phil sent me had the Pirahna match and GOLLY! it was freakin bloody (as opposed to freakin good.:)) There was a really good Tajiri/Crazy Big Japan Young Psychofreak vs Nakamaki/Bleached guy with the big crosses on his get-up. Tajiri supplied a lot wrestling (as did the psychofreak at times) and the guy with the crosses was very passable at selling Tajiri's stuff, which all combined with the

cult-forming excesses of Nakamaki and his heir apparent to form a very different kind of match. I kinda dug it because it worked on its own terms as a garbagy wrestling-infused streetfight that blows the rest of the stuff you usually get from Big Japan away because of the quality and dedication of the execution.

NEXT WEEK: WWO! EMLL! THE NEW GLENN TAPE WITH GAEA IF THE FREAKING US POSTAL SERVICE HASN'T LOST IT ALREADY! LUCHA! LUCHA! LUCHA!

CHEETAH~!